

**MINUTES OF THE
CUMBERLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Brunswick County Landfill Site Visit
Brunswick County, Virginia
June 16, 2006, 10.30 A.M.**

Planning & Zoning

Planning/Zoning Administrator
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Present: Patrick Smook, District 1
Keith Oulie, District 2
Bill Burger, Vice-Chair, District 3
David Brown, District 4
Roland Gilliam, District 5
Irene Speas, At-Large

Absent: Parker Wheeler, Chairman, At-Large
Bill Osl, Board of Supervisors Liaison

Also Present: Catherine Kahl, Clerk of the Commission
Allied Waste representatives and counsel

The meeting was called to order, the roll called, and a quorum established.

The Planning Commission met with Allied Waste officials and a Brunswick County employee. After lunch, the Planning Commission toured the landfill facility.

Commissioner Smook made a motion to adjourn to the monthly meeting scheduled for Monday, June 19, 2006 at 7.00pm, which was seconded by Commissioner Speas and unanimously approved.

Attested:

Parker Wheeler, Planning Commission Chair

Date

Catherine Kahl, Clerk of the Commission

Date

County Administrator
Judy O. Hollifield

Assistant Administrator
Sherry Swinson

County Attorney
Darvin E. Satterwhite

Article by Jason Norton for Farmville Herald (12/14/05)

By JASON NORTON

CUMBERLAND — Supervisors adjourned last Tuesday's regular Board meeting to a decidedly different venue: a landfill.

All five Supervisors traveled to the Brunswick Waste Management Facility on Wednesday, December 7, to get a first-hand look at an operational landfill. The facility is owned and managed by Allied Waste, Inc., one of the two companies that has submitted proposals to site a landfill in the county. Supervisors will visit a landfill owned by the other company, Republic, on December 19. That facility—the Uwaharrie Landfill—is located in Mt. Gilead, North Carolina.

Supervisors have scheduled a landfill public informational meeting for January 23 at 7 p.m. at the County elementary school. By that time, the County may have selected one of the two companies to begin the negotiation process, Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Osl said.

"When the RFP (Request For Proposal) gets awarded, it really is just the beginning of a process. It doesn't commit anybody to anything yet. After the RFP is awarded, we'll have to sit down and hammer out what's called a host agreement...that's all this detail (about) what will be included in an agreement and so forth. That's going to take a bit of time to negotiate. That won't happen before the January 23 meeting," Osl said.

Following that, if the County continues to move forward, a landfill company would have to apply for a re-zoning classification or a conditional use permit. The County Comprehensive Plan and Solid Waste Management Plan would both have to be updated, Osl said, estimating that it would take 6-8 months before the County began to seek permitting applications from agencies like the Department of Environmental Quality.

If approved, it would take about two to three years to have the landfill ready for opening, Osl said.

Following the trip, when contacted by The Herald, Osl and Second District Supervisor Cliff White shared insight on the tour.

The trip was initiated by Supervisors, who contacted Allied about visiting one of its three Virginia landfill sites. Supervisors rode together in Osl's vehicle to visit the facility, County Administrator Judy Ownby said.

Allied Waste Development Manager Ted Neura said his company did not pay for the trip. In order to meet with the necessary landfill management teams, Supervisors organized the trip in advance. Osl said that based upon his prior business experience making similar factory visits, he was aware that companies often "polish up" to present their best appearance for potential clients.

"It's not too difficult to pick that stuff out, to tell you the truth.

What they can't hide is the operation that's going on real-time while it's there, so you kind of get a good view of the operation in its true sense,"

Osl said.

Osl said the Board selected the Brunswick site because they felt it would be somewhat comparable to what Cumberland was considering in regards to demographics, agricultural makeup, surrounding land area, etc. Osl noted that Lawrenceville—which is near the site—was more similar to Farmville, but felt the remainder of Brunswick was comparable to Cumberland.

The Brunswick Waste Management Facility was opened eight years ago. Its actual landfill trash collection site occupies about 250 acres, according to Neura. The entire site spans about 1,200 acres, the majority of which is used as buffer property. The Brunswick facility accepts about 4,400 tons of refuse per day. About 200 refuse trucks visit the land-fill each day.

White said that in their discussions about a potential Cumberland landfill, Supervisors have discussed a site that would accommodate about 2,000 to 2,500 tons of garbage per day. Osl said that during its discussions with potential landfill companies, the County has not considered any restrictions on where potential trash may come from. Allied representatives, he said, mentioned accepting refuse from across Virginia and possibly Maryland, if the County established a contract with their company. "It looks like a lot of it (garbage) would come from within Virginia, but I wouldn't limit it to just that," Osl said. One portion of the Brunswick land-fill is devoted entirely to accepting refuse from Montgomery County, Maryland, including a large portion that is incinerated into ash into Maryland before being shipped to Brunswick. The other portion of the landfill takes in trash from sources inside and outside of Virginia.

The Brunswick site has major advantages in its transportation access, Osl said, referencing its proximity to Rt. 58, Interstate 85 and rail service.

Osl and White both commented that they were surprised and impressed at the lack of odor at the Brunswick landfill, Osl noting that Allied had worked to reduce odors following input from citizens. Osl said he "could not smell anything" when a "couple hundred feet away" from the active face of the landfill.

Osl said it was a mild day without wind, acknowledging those conditions could have contributed to the lack of odor.

The entire trash collection site is not used all at once. The landfill uses individual "cells"—lined basins created as needed—to hold trash. The cells are usually several acres in size. Cells are opened on an as-needed basis to accommodate new waste management technology, Osl said.

The Brunswick landfill operates from 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. At night, a film of cement kiln dust is sprayed onto open cells. That dust hardens, forming a rigid shell that prevents animals from getting into the trash, White explained. Tarps and soil are also used to cover the cells. Each morning, work crews open the cells back up again, he said.

Supervisors observed a new cell during one of its early construction phases. Osl and White described the structure of the cells, which use a two-three foot clay bottom that is covered with gravel, a rigid plastic liner (made from a thicker form of the material used for gas cans and car batteries), another cover, and more gravel.

Each cell floor pitched at an angle to collect liquid that may leach through a portion of the liner into a corner. A pumping system lies at the bottom corner of the cell to siphon leachate away, the Supervisors said.

White said it was explained that if an object punched through the liner, the slope of the cell would help to reduce the amount of liquid that would leak through (especially in cases where the object remained lodged in the hole in the liner). Liquid that did penetrate the liner would leak down to the pumping corner to be siphoned off, White said he was told.

Osl also noted that Supervisors were told that the seals of the hard plastic liner are pressure tested according to EPA regulations to ensure they are stronger than the liner itself before any material is deposited into them.

White, a military engineer, felt that the EPA and other agencies like the Department of Environmental quality would not permit landfills "if they weren't safe."

When asked about citizens' concerns about leaching, Osl acknowledged landfill companies will not guarantee that such problems won't occur.

"They won't do a guarantee, but neither will an automobile manufacturer or an airplane that we fly on or anything else. We just don't have those kind of guarantees in life. This is one that's there that they won't provide guarantee for, but it sure looks like in the redundancy of the system that it's almost as good as sending a guy to the moon...The difference here is that it doesn't have to be done at the lowest cost,"

Osl said.

Osl said that the County has checked into the safety and financial backgrounds of the two potential land-fill companies, noting that he felt each company's records were "very clean."

"I won't say that some of the companies that they've acquired over the years haven't had some problems. But when I look at the parent companies of Allied and Republic and I look at their financial statements and litigation activities, they have very good track records," Osl said.

Osl said that Supervisors intend to speak to some citizens who live near the Brunswick landfill to see what effect the landfill has had on their

day-to-day lives. Osl said Supervisors met with Ella Ridley, the

Brunswick County Solid Waste Management Director whose office is actually sited on the landfill property. Supervisors met with her apart from Allied employees or managers, Osl added.

"From what we could tell from talking to the county administration and to her, there were issues, obviously, when the landfill started up; there were people who had various concerns. Today, they (the concerns) seem to have gone away," Osl said. Property owners voiced little opposition to the facility today, Osl said Supervisors were told.

Ms. Ridley confirmed that statement Tuesday morning. "People have seen that it's not as bad as they thought it was going to be. As far as odors go, the odors are down pretty much. At one point, they did have some problems with it. That's been resolved. They're working on it still, but the odor has really gotten under control," Ms. Ridley said.

Most homeowners directly in the vicinity of the landfill construction site sold sell their property to the company prior to landfill construction, Ms. Ridley noted, saying that a handful of homes still are scattered around the landfill—one which her work crews can see easily during their daily operations.

Ms. Ridley called the management of the landfill "very cooperative."

One of the citizens' initial concerns at the Brunswick facility was truck traffic, Osl said.

Allied built a VDOT approved road leading onto the landfill property to relieve some traffic congestion, Osl said. That road was then donated to VDOT. Osl said if the County proceeded with a landfill, it could negotiate for similar improvements if access proved cumbersome.

Osl said the Brunswick site used several local contractors for construction as individual cells were built. Allied employs about 25 of its own workers at the Brunswick site, but works closely with local businesses to help provide jobs to nearly 50 more citizens, Osl said Supervisors were told. Also, Osl noted that Allied representatives said the company spends over \$800,000 per year with Brunswick quarry Vulcan Industries for crushed stone used to line cells.